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ABSTRACT

This open letter focuses on performance-based teacher education and certification (PBTE/C). The first section of the letter deals with anxieties about PBTE/C and about some of the people who have brought about this innovation. It comprises a survey. The second part of the paper makes various recommendations: a) the establishment of an independent PBTE/C Study Commission made up of teachers, researchers, academicians, laymen and the public; b) the development of a major experimental project in PBTE/C; c) implementation of the "paradigm for accountability," a positive form of teacher accountability; and d) support by teachers everywhere of several important recommendations of the United Federation of Teachers' Committee on Performance Certification. The final section of the letter acknowledges that PBTE/C can be a tremendous force for good as well as for ill and that there is much of value in it. (DDO)

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An Open Letter to Deans of Teacher Education and Directors of Teacher Certification

On Performance-Based Teacher Education/Certification

(Is It A "NEXT" Syndrome?)

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AFT

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

In the past five years, one of those periodic shifts in educational terminology has been in progress. A whole cluster of new terms centers around the generic term "performance-based." Dr. Bhaerman, in the paper, conducts us on a thoughtful exploration of what the new tendency may mean for teachers and schools.

If teachers are to fulfill their full professional promise, they must be able to cope with ideas like these discussed here. I enjoyed reading Dr. Bhaerman's paper and I think you will, too.

David Selden
President
American Federation of
Teachers, AFL-CIO

Dear Deans of Teacher Education and Directors of Teacher Certification:

Many of you have expressed interest in knowing of "the hopes, dreams, and anxieties" of the teaching profession as it concerns performance-based education (PBE) and teacher education (PBTE.) I would like to respond and share some of my individual, *personal* views on the matter. While I will deal somewhat with the underlying concepts of PBE and PBTE, I would like to stress some of the more important *implications*.

The preface to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education "State of the Art" monograph states that "only passing reference is made (in that document) to teacher certification . . . school programs for utilization of personnel, and other significant developments, not because they are considered unimportant but only because they lie beyond the scope of the (AACTE) Committee's assignment."[1] In this letter I will consider these issues which *do* lie very much within the scope of my own hopes, dreams and anxieties. I will focus, therefore, on performance-based teacher education *and* certification or PBTE/C (pronounced "Peebtec".) The AACTE has stated that it "invites, yes welcomes, dialogue."[2] Very good. In order to stimulate greater dialogue, I believe it is time for a response, for an "open letter." So that is the format I will use to express my personal hopes, dreams and anxieties, but they will be in reverse order: anxieties first (there are more of them), dreams, and finally my hopes.

* * *

On first viewing, the concepts of PBE and PBTE appear intrinsically neutral. They have many positive features and, as with many stimulating ideas, some gross weaknesses.

As with other *potentially powerful and constructive ideas*, this one seems to depend to a large extent on what is done with it and toward which ends the power is directed. Fine, if it is directed toward improving perennially weak teacher-training programs, especially in-service ones. But if it is used as another weapon in the growing arsenal against teachers, we — all of us — may be in for a hard time.

Whether PBTE/C is a passing fancy or a permanent fixture remains to be seen. Fortunately, I believe in many states it is not too late to determine which way this will go. Teachers can and must play a role in wisely fashioning the future direction of the movement. If it is a good thing, this may be the dawning of the *age* of the "Peebtec." But if it is not where education needs to go, we should all join in limiting it to the *year* of the "Peebtec." (Actually I wish it were that simple! Since this concept, obviously, is not all black or white, we must choose which elements to accept or to reject.) I will make several recommendations concerning the future direction of PBTE/C. These are some of my dreams. And, although I am somewhat skeptical, I do have some hopes for all of this.

Anxieties. As educational research director for the teachers' union, I come into contact with many of the materials dealing with PBTE/C. This has enabled me to become a generalist of sorts. I surely am not an expert in evaluation; there are many good university people writing about PBTE/C: Barak Rosenshine (Illinois), John Howell (City University of New York), etc. I certainly am not a philosopher (although in my early days I taught foundations' courses); there are many good ones writing about PBTE/C: Paul Nash (University of California at Santa Barbara), Robert Nash (Vermont), etc. In my work, I monitor many of the issues in the research literature. In the PBTE/C movement, I see a great many troubling aspects and ominous implications. I feel a particular anxiety about some State Education Department (SED) programs which appear to be instituting some of the very worst aspects of PBE and PBTE.

I am not sure if I agree with Gary Saretsky's assessment that PBTE/C is a "cotton-candy issue: you bite into it and there is not much there."[3] There *is* much "there." (As a matter of fact, Fred Daniel of the Florida SED supports PBTE/C because "it makes sense."[4] This is not unlike climbing Mt. Everest because "It is there.")

To the USOE, "Mt. Peebtec" is very much "there." It has had much to do with making the molehill into the size it has become. Now it seems to want to make everyone climb it because, as William Smith of the U.S. Office of Education has said, "it is the logical starting point." Smith told a PBTE/C conference that ". . . (prospective teachers, teachers, and trainers of teachers) cannot seem to get two educators to agree on what the approach is all about. Actually, it is a mouthful, and can sound somewhat threatening. The point is, however, that what people are uncertain about they tend to distrust."[5] How right he is!

It is threatening — particularly to those citizens concerned with the need to increase the financial support for public schools. It was threatening from the time President Nixon promised to "get more education for the dollar" before he supplied "more dollars for education,"[6] to his three vetoes of education bills, to the more recent comments of federal operatives who have to carry out the Nixonian view of education: stem the tide. The reference here is to an acquaintance in the USOE, who "put it perfectly clear" recently when, in describing a particular program goal, he stated that it was intended to "stem the tide." He was speaking of money expenditures for schools, of course. Similarly, a former HEW Director of Education, Planning and Evaluation told the participants at a CUNY-sponsored Teacher Leadership Program that the administration more than likely would not support new legislation which would produce new sums of money for elementary and secondary education and that it was very doubtful that the administration would contribute 1/3 of the funding for elementary and secondary education which a number of educational organizations feel is necessary for survival of the system.[7] Former Assistant Secretary of HEW Sidney Marland also issued a warning that schools must expect "some difficult times ahead" as the administration implements the President's budget-stemming policy. The New York *Times* in an editorial which reported Marland's statement said that the phrase sounded like "a euphemism for disaster."[8]

Some states apparently have bought the notion that PBTE/C is "the logical starting point." Briefly, here is what three of them are doing:

Arizona: Moving toward performance *re*certification . . . abolishing the requirement that a teacher must have a year of postgraduate education to quality for full certification . . . tentatively setting 1974 as a deadline to devise a way of including assessment of teaching ability as a criterion for *re*certification.[9] [*Reaction:* There is, apparently, a "stem the tide" issue tied to the debate: in Arizona teacher salaries are determined by the number of hours of postgraduate education. With the elimination of the 5th year requirement, many fear that boards will hire mainly novice teachers with only a bachelor's degree.]

Utah: Adopting proficiency guidelines for the "media endorsement" certificate . . . setting up criteria for human relations which includes "affective" language in an effort to appear to deal with knowledge, skills and *attitudes* of teachers; e.g., one of the "human relations" criteria is that "the candidate will express his attitude toward scheduled and unscheduled student use of the media center justifying his position."[10] [*Reaction:* Does *expressing* an attitude mean that "affective" criteria has been met?]

Illinois: Proposing three levels of certification: Initial, Continuing, and Renewal of the Continuing . . . continuous assessment of teachers will be required for Continuing and Renewal certification.[11] [*Reaction:* This is common in states which are considering the move toward periodic *re*certification/*de*certification. Teachers are legitimately concerned about how the *re* or the *de* will be done. They are concerned that those who aren't *re'd* will be *de'd* . . . in more ways than one!]

There are PBTE/C activities in Florida, Texas, and Washington, and rumblings in Minnesota, Vermont, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. It has been estimated that as many as 30 states are involved with PBTE/C in some way. (In Pennsylvania, where I spent some time in the State Education Department, the following idea also has been put forth: "Although it would appear to be so, there is nothing sacrosanct about four years of college to become a teacher . . . teacher preparation could be accomplished in much less time."[12] Subscribers to the monthly newsletter of the Multi-State Consortium of PBTE will read of one state after another either jumping on the train or getting dangerously close to the tracks. But it is New York State, first in the nation in so many ways, which seems to epitomize "Peebtec fervor" in their desire, seemingly, never to come in second to anyone. Dr. Gazetta of the NY-SED stated their objectives in the spring of 1972 with this eye-opening statement: "The direction is clear; the path to take us there is not so clear."[13] State Commissioner of Education Nyquist has "stated for several years that future certification should depend on performance over a period of time, with tenure not granted until that performance is adjudged to be competent . . . ."[14] Former New York City Chancellor Scribner, in testimony before a state legislative committee, proposed that tenured teachers submit to a relicensing process based on performance at five-year intervals.[15] (Interestingly, the New York *Times* column in which this was reported, and which dealt primarily with PBTE/C, was called "Tenure: The Case For — And Against.") The Regent's Master Plan in New York would establish all new teacher-education programs on a competency base for 1973 and would launch PBTE/C by 1975. Dr. Benjamin Rosner, a strong PBTE/C advocate, was forced to point out that "The [Regent's] timetable for the initiation, development, and adoption of competency-based teacher education prematurely aborts the power of the competency-based teacher education hypothesis."[16]

In summary, these are some typical illustrations of what is happening in several states as they begin to institute PBTE/C. Rosenshine and McGaw have noted that one of the tragedies of education is that "we move from innovation to innovation, failing to conduct, synthesize, and disseminate research about each change." Directing their remarks to state legislators, they caution them to "be aware of the paucity of our knowledge."[17]

These are some of the reasons why I feel a good deal of anxiety about "Peebtec." The review which follows discloses why I am nervous about some of the folks who have brought us this new innovation. Let me start with the premier paper, Elam's "State of the Art" AACTE monograph.[18] Actually the title is a misnomer. PBTE/C is hardly an "art" at this point, although it is being implemented in many "states" — of the union, that is. It more accurately might be called "Plight of the Technology." Elam summarizes a number of serious problems: *the criterion or levels of mastery problem* (e.g., What will be accepted as *evidence* of successful performance? Elam states that "no one can provide an all-purpose answer to the evidence question, partly because answers are situation-specific, but more fundamentally because our knowledge base is too thin."); *the scope problem* (behavioral objectives are "difficult to apply when the outcomes sought are complex and subtle, and particularly when they are affective or attitudinal in character"); *the philosophic problems* (it does not seem to encourage "a wide-angled, existentialist vision of his [the students'] learning experience that will enable him to remain open to unpredicted learning outcomes"); *political and management difficulties* (additional funding would be needed "if salutary outcomes are to be ensured.") Elam's conclusion, however, is that *assessment is the most significant problem.* (" . . . the overriding problem before which the others pale to insignificance is that of the adequacy of measurement instruments and procedures.")

Massanari, writing one of the first overviews on this issue, pointed out a number of similar problem areas: the danger of 'narrowness', establishing performance criteria, assessing performance, the need for broad-based participation, the need for research, the certification question, financial questions, and the need for language clarification.[19]

Broudy has pointed out that PBTE "aims at more or less rote mastery of a repertoire of explicitly formulated knowledge and skills" but, he explains, PBTE appears unable to accommodate other important ingredients of teaching. By ignoring the role of "understanding" in education, Broudy argues, PBTE "is in danger of capturing everything except what is most significant in many kinds of learning, viz.,

significance."[20]

Schalock, a supporter of the end-product notion of PBTE/C (i.e., judging a teacher's performance on student achievement), presents a number of pertinent issues which need to be resolved if either teaching behavior *or* the products of teaching behavior are to be used as a basis of certification. Because of their importance, because they are mainly unresolved, and because until they are resolved they are a chief cause of anxiety, they are presented below at some length, although not in their entirety.[21]

Unresolved issues regarding teaching behavior: (1) What classes of teaching behavior are . . . teachers to be able to demonstrate? And who is to determine what these classes of behavior are to be? (2) What will the 'effective performance of specified teaching behaviors' look like? What will the criteria be for the successful performance? Who will determine these criteria? How will a behavior be assessed to determine if it meets these criteria? And who will do the assessing? (3) In what settings will the behavior be demonstrated? (4) In how many settings? (5) What variation in the performance of a given teaching behavior . . . is acceptable across students? Are all students in a given program expected to perform to the same criterion level on the same set of teaching behaviors? If not, who is to determine what variance is acceptable? (*Note:* It is understood that "students" here refer to either preservice persons in PBTE or inservice teachers in PBTE/C.) (6) What is to be the functional relationship between knowledge of subject matter, nature of children's learning, etc., and given classes of teaching behavior in relation to the final criteria for certification? Will demonstration of a given level of mastery on all be required? Or will the demonstration of a given teaching behavior supersede or be able to take the place of given classes of knowledge or given sets of attitudes?

Unresolved issues regarding the products of teaching behavior: (1) What are the pupil outcomes to be realized? What are the non-instructional outcomes? (2) Who is to determine what these outcomes should be? If the answer is a 'coalition of institutions and agencies, with strong community representation,' then one must determine specifically *who* is to be represented in a coalition and *how* such representation is to be made. (3) What will the 'successful realization of an instructional or non-instruction outcome' look like? . . . Since success cannot . . . be normative or standardized, it means operationally that success must always be situation specific. Given such a point of view, what would be meant operationally by certification standards? (4) How many times and with what kinds of children must . . . teachers demonstrate that they can in fact bring about given classes of outcomes? . . . Must they demonstrate that they can bring about a given outcome for differing groups of children, or different individual children within a single classroom setting? And how many outcomes must be demonstrated? (5) What variation in outcome demonstration can be permitted across students within a given institution, or across institutions within a given state? Can students vary in number of outcomes demonstrated? Can they vary in the criteria of success to be applied to a given outcome, depending upon the nature of the pupils being taught or the context in which teaching is occurring? (6) What is the functional relationship between knowledge of subject matter, the nature of children's learning, etc., and the demonstration of the ability to bring about given classes of instructional and noninstructional outcomes in relation to teacher certification?

Combs discusses quite fully some of the hazards of the behavioral approach including, among other things, the negative effects on teachers' morale. His comments on PBTE/C are pertinent:

> Some state departments of education are busily at work compiling thousands of behavioral objectives which teachers will be expected to know and seek for the children they work with, a process made even more frantic by federal agencies which make behavioral objectives an absolute requirement for educational research or program support. The *madness* (emphasis added) has even spread to some teachers' colleges, where teachers currently in training are expected to check themselves out against thousands of teacher 'competencies', another name for behavioral objectives.

He concludes with this admonition:

> Unfortunately, the behavioral objectives approach sounds infallible to the lay public, to industrialists, businessmen, and legislators. To them, the behavioral objectives, performance-based criteria approach seems like the perfect solution to education's problems. *Professional educators should know better* (emphasis added). If they permit this distorted view to prevail unchallenged as the primary approach to educational accountability, they will have failed everyone: themselves, the schools, society, but most of all, a generation of students who will have to live out the consequences . . .[22]

Robert Nash speaks of PBTE as a "new fetish." He notes the over-zealousness in which educators "are adopting a model which promises to bestow a magical kind of scientific-technological warrant on our professional endeavors." He warns that "we are fetishizing techniques and trivializing the entire teacher preparation program." Nash also speaks of the quasi-mystical language which has come to surround PBTE. "Such mystagory — the inevitable offspring of fetishistic thinking," he writes, "would be laughable, if it were not for the legitimacy it is getting in many teacher education curricula." Nash envisions this bizarre outcome: an image of a trainee leaving his behavioral objective exercise with a copy of *Summerhill* under his arm![23] Elsewhere, with Agne, Nash warns teacher educators of their inordinate preoccupation with quantifiable and incremental competency procedures, admonishing them for "becoming deafened to the cries of students for competencies in areas that do not lend themselves to precise assessment" and for ignoring "those learnings that may be emotional, experience-based, inductive, and spontaneous."[24]

Another Nash, Paul, has explored similar territory in analyzing the humanistic element in PBTE. He too is vitally concerned that the movement not ignore such goals as self-direction, responsibility for one's own learning, development of curiosity, wonder, awe, imagination, commitment,

openness, honesty, respect for self and others, all of which he seemingly feels are lacking in an approach which tends to close down alternatives, reduce creativity, innovation, and divergence.[25]

E. Brooks Smith's position is related to both Nash's. In his correspondence he points out that most programs for assessing teaching miss the very essence of teaching, that which deals with ideation and valuing. "I guess," he recently wrote me, "that the concept of terminal or exit performance objectives is the troublesome one when dealing with the intellectual and valuative aspects of teaching that represent an integrating situation involving many factors at one time . . . I know many city teachers who are inwardly in revolt but don't dare fight the new systematization of teaching that is being forced on them . . ." Smith's concept of "Beyond Performance" would look at the "indications of the application of thought and values to teaching in *situations* that present the teacher candidate with opportunities to *express and apply* his professional and academic knowledge." His point is that "because a teaching performance is of little value unless it exhibits many competencies in complex instructional situations . . . there is no way to describe one 'end' performance or 'exit' performance that designates accomplished teaching."[26] (I will have some thoughts on the concept of exit, too, in my concluding postscript.)

Another Smith, B. Othanel, also has some pertinent thoughts on the subject. He decimates the end-product notion of PBTE/C, noting that there simply are too many uncontrolled variables in measuring the effects of teaching on students' behavior. Smith makes these essential points: (1) that pupils come to a subject already in possession of some of its knowledge, (2) that the classroom is not a closed system which excludes outside influences, (3) that product criteria demand more evidence than can be readily provided, and (4) that product criteria require more evidence than is demanded of any other type of professionals, e.g., "Medical doctors," he writes, "are not licensed because of their ability to cure a percentage of their patients, nor are lawyers licensed because they can guarantee justice for a certain proportion of their clients."[27]

[*Note:* On this point, Kenneth Goodman[28] offers these humorous "examples" of criteria from other professions: *Law* — (1) The student will give five summation speeches to juries. Three will be as prosecutor and two as defense counsel. He will win the verdict in 80% of the cases. (2) The student will draw up contracts for the sale of six homes. If 85% of the parties fail to sue he will be deemed to have met the criterion. *Religion* — (1) The student will appeal to a congregation five times for the church building fund. If he collects an average of 20% more than the average of the previous year's collections, he will have met criterion. (2) The student will pray for devine guidance ten times with 90% successful decisions resulting. *Medicine* — (1) The student will complete a module on incisions. He will close them with 95% accuracy. (2) The student will inform ten persons that they have one month to live. Criterion will be that 80% will be smiling and composed afterwards. *Airline Pilot* — (1) The student will raise and lower landing gear on a DC-10. He will continue until he has completed six successive attempts without error. (2) The student will talk five would-be hijackers out of hijacking planes. He will do so with no more than 5% casualties and no more than $200,000 in ransom payments.]

B.O. Smith, furthermore, identifies three difficulties which must be overcome before his "optimum criteria" (academic proficiency *and* the ability to perform skills and behaviors) can be used to license teachers: (1) there is no satisfactory list of basic teacher skills and behaviors, (2) we have no systematic scheme for observing teacher behavior that is comprehensive enough to cover a catalogue on basic skills and behaviors, and (3) we have not decided who will collect the data on the performance of the candidate, a costly operation, Smith writes, and one which, I would add, is not likely to "stem and tide."

B. O. Smith *and* William Smith both support the approach to certification suggested by Lieberman: *extra-legal certification* through educational specialty boards.[29] Without going into a lengthy analysis of what they are, how they would work, and who would govern them, it is sufficient — for the purposes here — to relate some aspects of extra-legal certification with which I am most concerned:

- It would enable teacher salaries to be determined by the competence of the individual. (B.O. Smith)
- It is a way in which to recognize and regard superior teachers and other school personnel. (William Smith)
- Such certification would need to identify the bearer with a special expertise and entitle him to special salary increments. If experienced personnel can acquire new status and additional income through special certification as 'master teachers' or teacher trainers, such certification would be an effective incentive for staff development. Individuals acquiring board certificates would be recognized as among the most competent teachers or teacher trainers in the nation and would be entitled to special salary increments. (Lieberman)

Lieberman also suggests that this approach "would avoid the historic objections to merit pay because the designation of who is board-certified would not be made locally; the local employer would not be involved in board certification procedures. For this reason, there would be no employer favoritism or subjectivity involved . . . teacher organizations could bargain for the differentials for board-certified teachers . . ." No matter how you slice it, this arrangement still will look to many teachers like *merit* pay —— *federalized style!*

There has been much written on the serious problem of evaluation in PBTE/C. John Howell highlights seven of the most salient problems, including this extremely important point:

> A particularly difficult problem in evaluating teaching performance is that of gathering sufficient accurate data, pertinent to the purpose of the evaluation and free from the influence of factors over which the teacher could not be expected to have any control. If teaching performance is to be judged on the basis of pupil learn-

ing, great care must be used to eliminate major sources of error in the assessment of learning. Among the major sources of error are inadequate or poorly planned sampling and insufficient control over the conditions under which information is obtained.[30]

Merwin also focuses upon measurement considerations and the "evidence" question in re-emphasizing Elam's point that "no one can provide an all-purpose answer to this question . . . partly because answers are . . . situation specific, but more fundamentally because our knowledge base is too thin."[31]

Andrews, who has written about the overlapping nature of competency-based teacher education and certification, points out a number of difficulties of this type of certification. Under the significant heading, "From Objective Data to Subjective Decision", Andrews writes that while it is fairly easy to analyze a teacher's performance, "it is relatively difficult to make a jump from the analysis of the data, which is objective, to a decision on whether or not that person should be issued a certificate." Another related problem which he points out is the difficulty in establishing a system without first conceptualizing the role (or roles) of the teacher-to-be-certificated. Andrews argues that this is "a doubly difficult task" because of lack of clear consensus on the issue. He offers this interesting example: "Should all teachers need to ask open-ended questions . . . ? The problems that spin out of that one issue would include: (a) Do all teachers need to ask open-ended questions? (b) Are some open-ended questions more desirable than others? (c) How often should teachers ask open-ended questions? (d) Is there any research that proves that teachers who ask open-ended questions achieve greater learning on the part of the pupils?" He concludes by suggesting that each state "must obtain some form of consensus on literally thousands of such issues before they can develop a program."[32]

Edelfelt also feels strongly that assessment of performance must be situation-specific as he argues that "the fact that performance or behavior is not an isolated entity, that it does not exist irrespective of everything else or anything else is of tantamount importance, and is often ignored when performance criteria become a preoccupation."[33]

Quirk also analyzes a number of evaluation problems. In his view, one of the main problems is to decide on a cutoff score for deciding when a candidate has received competency in the knowledge or skill being assessed. He warns that some programs have suggested incorporating checklists of behavioral objectives into the trainee's transcript to indicate the skills for which the teacher has demonstrated competence, "a posture toward which should be shouted, 'Whoa!' " Quirk concludes with two important points: (1) The furor toward the movement is not likely to result in any significant change "unless someone applies the brakes to those parts of the band-wagon that ignore some of the basic concepts in measurements"; (2) "Before we run too far toward the goal line containing the long list of performance objectives, we should stop long enough not only to discover whether the ball we are carrying is square, round, or ellipsoidal, but also if it has any air in it."[34]

Shugrue has written such an excellent paper that I am tempted to abstract it in 600 words.[35] But I won't; read it for yourself. I will simply mention some of the insightful statements you will find:

- The future of PBTE rests not on local, state, and federal pressure . . . but on the research and informed debate.
- PBTE can be seen as a prime example of the 'accountability fad' . . . the latest attempt to impose a highly questionable system approach on education.
- There is, to put it bluntly, no more empirical, objective evidence that the application of systems technology to instruction will contribute significantly more to improving the effectiveness or efficiency of an educational program than would the installation of an official school astrologer. [Quoted from James Hoetker.]
- Too narrow a program, too rigid a specification . . . risks producing teaching robots rather than informed, educated, committed teachers . . . .
- Assessment of performance remains the nagging, unsettling problem . . . .

Hogan has warned that PBTE/C "must not be mandated to teachers" and that teachers must be "convinced . . . persuaded."[36] Nearly everyone seems to agree with this and also with the related realization that the hypothesis must be tested. Rosner stressed this point when he presented this idea on how such research should be conducted: (1) pupil performance criteria should not be utilized since it is "unrealistic, simplistic, and does not square with research data" and (2) decisions which affect teacher training should be made "apart from certification."[37] Others have called for research on PBTE/C. Rosenshine and Furst present the most comprehensive statement. After a thorough review of research on teacher performance criteria, they summarize with "an admission that we know very little about the relationship between classroom behavior and student growth."[38] Elfenbein also calls attention to needed research in this area.[39] She notes the need for deeper, more penetrating analyses, while Krathwohl, in the introduction to her AACTE monograph, notes the rudimentary state of evaluation and management systems.[40]

In New York City, the United Federation of Teachers Committee on Performance Certification reports that they too were struck by the primitive state of the research in this area. Sandra Feldman reports that the NY-SED is "busily listing behavioral objectives by the thousands but when asked whether they were planning to validate them, the SED (representative) answered that, 'No, they had no funds for that.' " According to Feldman, the person in charge of PBTE/C in the NY-SED stated that "We can't wait" for sophisticated instruments of measurement to be developed even though he admitted that what we have is not very sophisticated. Feldman discloses that the state representative not only advocated basing certification on assessed performance but continuing certification on this basis so that every five years a teacher either will be *re*certified or *de*certified on the basis of demonstrating required competency. She concludes, "Tenure will be destroyed, but no one yet

knows what the skills to be required are, how we will measure them when we figure out what they are, or whether the skills we pick actually have an effect on learning." The New York state teachers feel anxiety, too, for they wish that "for once, at least, we ought to base a fundamental change on substantive, proven knowledge instead of on public relations and guess work."[41] UFT President Albert Shanker also warns that without the necessary preparation, research, and development suggested by the Committee on National Program Priorities in Teacher Education, PBTE/C could "end up on the junk pile with the many other innovations which turned out to be nothing more than public relations ploys."[42] [Shanker's reference here is to *The Power of Competency-Based Teacher Education*, the report of Dr. Benjamin Rosner's committee, published by Allyn and Bacon, 1972.]

AFT President David Selden has cautioned educators involved in the PBTE/C movement that when we substitute performance criteria for academic criteria, "something has to give." A greater emphasis on performance *per se*, Selden warns, is bound to result in a lowering of the standards for academic selectivity. Selden stresses that teacher organizations, which have struggled for many years to raise academic standards, must not sit by idly and watch them be eroded by the cost effectiveness now on the loose in many of our state education departments, not to mention the USOE.[43]

Over two years ago, upon returning from one of the first national conferences on this subject, Patrick Daly, AFT vice-president and a member of the AACTE/PBTE committee, brought back some words of caution, speaking of "the potential misuse of instruments of evaluation that are initially designed to aid trainee teachers but which could be used to evaluate teachers for purposes of retention, promotion, or the awarding of salary increments." He noted that educators "must be alert to any attempts to use the new knowledge to supply answers to problems with which such knowledge was never designed to cope."[44] How appropriate those thoughts are, particularly now as state education departments are pushing, with an ample shove from the USOE, toward implementing PBTE/C.

Overzealousness? Failure of the PBTE movement? Mystagory? Trivial? Quasi-mystical? Federalized merit-pay? Systems engineering? Paucity of knowledge? Madness? Rudimentary state of evaluation and management systems? Knowledge and research base too thin? Situation-specific? Bandwagon? Federal pressure? Accountability fad? Extra-legal certification? Consensus on thousands of issues? Official school astrologers? Teaching robots? Tenure will be destroyed? Lowering of academic standards? If the next section is called Dreams, perhaps this one should be retitled Nightmares.

Dreams. (If this were not a letter, this section would be called Recommendations.)

Dream #1: The establishment of an independent PBTE/C Study Commission made up of teachers, researchers, academicians, laymen and the public.

- The Study Commission would serve as a clearinghouse of information for the "reasoned debate" which is so sorely needed. It would attempt to educate state legislators to the complexities and implications of PBTE/C and, more importantly, it would *develop guidelines, monitor, and evaluate an experimental project in PBTE/C.* (See below.)
- Possible groups to be involved: e.g., AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO, NAACP, American Educational Research Association, National Student Association, National Congress of Parents and Teachers.
- Suggested educators and researchers, e.g., Rosenshine, Combs, Howell, Nash (both Paul and Robert), Smith (both B.O. and E.B.). It also should include representatives from the USOE, e.g., Allen Schmieder and from state education departments, e.g., Wendell Allen of Washington. The basic idea here is that if the concept of PBTE/C really is workable it should be subjected to the test — and thinking — of its friendly and some not so friendly critics.

Dream #2: The development of *a major experimental project* in PBTE/C. This recommendation is based upon and is in agreement with Rosner's belief that the "hypotheses must be tested, once and for all." [I agree with and support Rosner's position stated above that pupil performance criteria should not be utilized since it is "unrealistic, simplistic, and does not square with research data" and that decisions which affect teacher training should be made "apart from certification."][45] The major guidelines would include:

- A long-range longitudinal study of perhaps 8 to 10 years.
- It would be based upon what B.O. Smith calls the *optimum criteria*, i.e., academic proficiency *and* teaching skills and behaviors, rather than on the "ability to produce changes in pupil behavior."[46] Therefore, the project should be directly aimed at resolving the "unresolved issues regarding teacher behavior" which were analyzed so precisely by Schalock.[47]
- There would be no lowering of academic standards for certification. Participants in the experiment would continue to be certificated by standard methods. No teacher would be handicapped or punished by a poor showing, no information would be used against the teacher, participation would be voluntary, and no participant would be identified if he or she did not wish to be. The experiment, hopefully, would provide data on *if it were done* "the PBTE/C way," i.e., if PBTE/C were to be the only certification approach, *as it may be someday*, if its value is proven. This experiment would provide useful information on whether or not PBTE/C is ultimately feasible.

Massive federal funding of research on the related concepts of PBTE/C, accountability, and humanism in education is urgently needed. If the advocates in the USOE are really as interested in improving educational systems as they say they are, they must provide an equal amount of money to researching Combs' approach and E. B. Smith's concepts as they have in supporting the B. F. Skinner type. Pressure must be exerted to provide major support for a

long term period of research along the lines posed by Combs[48] and E.B. Smith.[49] (*See note at bottom of page.*)

Dream #3: Implementation of the "paradigm for accountability."[50] a *positive* form of teacher accountability. The "paradigm" has three overall aspects:

- constructive, non-punitive, diagnostic *evaluation and assessment* which would lead to,
- *continuous in-service growth programs* stressing the attainment of basic teaching skills rather than the achievement of narrow behavioral objectives, and which would lead to,
- *horizontal differentiation* of teaching roles, coupled with the redeployment or reassignment of teachers into roles which are more suitable to their skills, wherever necessary.

The instruments of the performance-based movement can be *among the evaluative tools* for this end. They can be one out of many devices used for diagnosis of teaching behaviors and skills which need improvement.

Such an approach also would include a *probationary teaching certificate* (a pattern in which a three-year teacher internship is developed) and a *permanent teaching certificate* (a pattern in which a constructive evaluation is conducted every fourth year, followed by a period in which each teacher can participate in a number of growth experiences.) I believe that obsolescence can be overcome without the restrictions imposed by rigid certification levels and forced renewal and that it can be prevented by negotiating contracts with meaningful provisions for updating of teachers' skills and knowledge. Forced certification renewal to offset obsolescence is unwarranted and unnecessary. The determination of appropriate continuing teacher education is not a function to be performed by state education departments; such decisions can be made more intelligently at the local level through what we have called the "Continuous Progress Alternative" to forced renewal. (These concepts are discussed more thoroughly in various AFT-QuEST papers.)[51]

Dream #4: The United Federation of Teachers' Committee on Performance Certification has made several important recommendations which I believe merit the support of teachers everywhere.[52] Their recommendations include the following:

- *Intensive research* in teacher behavior and instructional methodology to scientifically and objectively determine the criteria necessary to positively affect learning.
- Support of the position that *research and development* in this area should begin with development, that is, with *a model* put together by what experienced classroom teachers think is valid. Student teachers can then be taught in that image, and the effectiveness of the approach can then be measured in the schools.
- *Opposition to the product notion* of teacher performance, to attempts to institute PBTE/C *before the completion of validated research*, to the concept of *continuing certification*, and to attempts to relate PBTE/C to *merit pay*.

Sub-dream #1: Purchase (at government expense) and distribution to all U.S. Office of Education and state education department personnel, a copy of Arthur Combs' *Educational Accountability: Beyond Behavioral Objectives*. A criterion-reference test should be developed by the Educational Testing Service on the contents of the booklet.

Sub-dream #2: A paid trip (also at government expense) for Bob, Howie, Susan, Maria, and possibly Lou, the fictional students of Weber and Cooper's scenario,[53] to Burlington, Vermont, to talk to Robert Nash. ("Students implore us to assist them in their pursuit of personhood. We strive to turn them exclusively into competent functionaries by giving them a rigid, skills-centered curriculum which borders on the inconsequential and the nugatory. They ask for a program which balances the need for performative skills with the insights gained from concerted self-understanding and self-definition. We offer them our fetishes and insist on their allegiance.")[54] Allegiance is easy to obtain — especially in fictional scenarios.

Sub-dream #3: All USOE and SED personnel must be able to pass the following test at a level of 83.3% accuracy (5 out of 6). Match the statements with the persons who made them.

1. Barak Rosenshine and Norma Furst — (University of Illinois and Temple University respectively)	a. "Let us make a commitment to the massive research which is desperately needed. Let us, for once in education base a fundamental change on substantive, proven knowledge instead of public relations and guess work."[55]

Combs: "A major effort designed to explore the nature of humanist thought and its implications for educational practice is called for . . . . A place to begin might be with the deflection to more humanistic concerns of a lion's share of the funds and human energies currently devoted to championing behavioral objectives. Such a diversion would provide the means and the manpower. It would also contribute to the moratorium (on behavioral objectives) called for. It might even result in saving the taxpayers a great deal of money."

E.B. Smith: "We are still trying to develop some systematic approaches to teaching assessment that are alternatives to the mechanistic approach of present-day systems that lean so heavily on the operant conditioning model . . . teachers are going to want some alternatives to the hundreds, even thousands, of behavioral objectives that they are being asked to meet one by one."

2. Stanley Elam *(Phi Delta Kappan)*

b. "The lack of research is a tremendous deterrent to the successful implementation at the present time of a competency-based certification policy."[56]

3. Sandra Feldman (United Federation of Teachers)

c. "It is time to stop touting structural panaceas and to begin developing the research which may produce this knowledge."[57]

4. Theodore Andrews (New York State Education Department)

d. "No one can provide an all-purpose answer to the evidence question, partly because answers are situation-specific, but more fundamentally because our knowledge base is too thin."[58]

5. William Drummond (Formerly of SED in Washington; currently at University of Florida)

e. "Great ideas have been undone in the past for want of evaluation systems that prove they are as good as we think they are. So it seems to me that we have to build an effective confirmatory component into the system at the outset. We can't be afraid to have a journal of negative findings."[59]

6. William Smith (USOE)

f. "There is a lack of research base to work with comfort and we won't have it for a long time. Perhaps this movement is being sold too early."[60]

Hopes. Performance based teacher education and certification — PBTE/C — Peebtec — is a tremendous force for good . . . as well as for ill. The potentialities in this movement for educational reform are immense. While I have highlighted some of the problems, the caveats, I do not wish to convey the impression that there is little or no value in PBTE/C. There is much value. Many others have written about those aspects; for example, the most obvious value is the research and experimentation which must occur in the name of PBTE/C so that we can begin to learn how— and if— teaching strategies affect learning. To do this we must look at teacher behavior in the context of learning response, as PBTE/C research promises to do.

Surely the areas for needed reform are as long as my perhaps overly-long review of the troublesome problems. Many of these reforms are long overdue in teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, development, and utilization. Field and laboratory experiences for pre-service teachers are urgently needed, as is proper teacher deployment and differentiation of teaching roles. Various new routes and alternative entrances to the profession must be explored. Teacher evaluation and in-service procedures certainly need improvements. I have suggested one such approach in Dream #3. The techniques and instruments of PBE and PBTE can assist in implementing the "paradigm for accountability" — as long as we keep in mind our philosophical priorities.

While this paper surely is not the place to become involved in an extensive philosophic discourse, several theoretical alternatives must be decided by PBTE/C advocates if we are to avoid placing certain educational means at a higher priority than certain educational ends. PBTE/C advocates need to resolve an elemental but extremely significant question raised by educational philosophers: Is Knowledge something that can be transmitted, as an object, from one human being to another *or* is knowledge the residue of one's unique and personal experiences?[61] It is my belief that the first alternative would lead educators toward an overemphasis of systems technology as an end in itself. If this is the focus taken in PBTE/C, we probably should make it the "year of . . ."

" However, if the focus is upon developing unique and meaningful personal experiences for both teachers and students, perhaps we could make it the "age of . . . . " This is my *hope.* Perhaps the implementation of the recommendations suggested in this paper can help bring this about. Until then I, and I am certain many teachers, will feel deep anxieties about "Peebtec."

Sincerely yours,

Robert D Bhaerman

Robert D. Bhaerman

P.S. Why do I feel that PBTE/C may be a "No Exit" syndrome? For two reasons.

(1) You will recall that emphasis in PBTE is shifting to exit requirements and away from entrance requirements.[62] New exit requirements are being developed. This is quite clear for pre-service teachers, teachers in preparation. But for in-service teachers it is not so clear. The related concepts of *re*certification/*de*certification/continuing certification/certification levels or ladders establish *false exits.* What is applicable to pre-service teachers is not acceptable for teachers in-service. In pre-service education, there is a clear demarcation: graduation from college and a teacher education program is a clear *exit.* With it comes a certificate. This is not as readily applicable for teachers in-service. Therefore, state education departments often concoct these *false exits.* To my way of thinking, this is *no exit.* PBTE has been called "a multi-faceted concept in search of practitioners."[63] PBTE/C more accurately might be called "a multi-problemed concept in search of an exit." The "exit" many SED's seem to have in mind is either another level of certification or another certification in five year and after that, another in five years, and so on. Again I stress, *false exits* for teachers are *no exits.* Obsolescence, as we noted above, can be overcome without the restrictions imposed by forced renewal - or *false exits.*

(2) Some aspects of PBTE/C appear to force teachers into a narrow, behavioristic mold. Will there also be room for the existentialist-teacher, the one who arouses personal responses in his or her students, the one who awakens students to choice and responsibility and is himself or herself awake to choice and responsibility? Is their only destiny to be put off somewhere in a room as in Sartre's *No Exit?* You will recall in Sartre's play the three characters can no longer act in existential freedom. Death has reduced them to eternal essence. One of the characters says, "There is no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is - other people." Are schools to become a living hell too, made up of a staff of "teaching robots" and "official school astrologers"? Will "Peebtec" be the new virus which causes the death of teachers' freedoms by reducing their *choice* to a list of eternal behavioral objectives? Or will we listen to men like Arthur Combs who reminds us that "Professional educators should know better."

My hope is that we know better, that we get our philosophical priorities in order, and that we will not get trapped in a movement which leads us all downward to a No Exit, hellish existence. In short, Deans and Directors, I hope you don't "blow it." I caution you, therefore, to *proceed slowly* until a more solid research and knowledge base is established. Frankly, I am amazed at the speed at which this innovation is being propelled at teachers and the public, particularly when many of the basic concepts are untested. When they are tested, let us hope that we do not find they are "unsafe at *any* speed." Let us go slowly until we know exactly what we are doing, until we have the necessary bases which so many educators are talking about. Let us "cool it" until we have a clearer view of where "the path" may lead us. It might not be only up "Mt. Peebtec." It could be toward "No Exit."

MT. PEEBTEC

— or the "No Exit" Song —

The teachers got a license,
The teachers got a license,
The teachers got a license,
And what do you think he (or she) saw?

He (or she) saw another license,
He (or she) saw another license,
He (or she) saw another license,
And what did he have to do?

He (or she) got the other license,
He (or she) got the other license,
He (or she) got the other license,
And what do you think he (or she) saw?

He (or she) saw another license,
He (or she) saw another license,
He (or she) saw another license,
And what did he have to do?

He (or she) got the other license,
He (or she) got the other license,
He (or she) got the other license,
And what do you think he (or she) saw?

. . . . . and so on to "No Exit" . . .

THE RAMBLIN' WRECK FROM OLD PEEBTEC

Last year in New York State, where "Peebtec" is to be implemented, one of their State Education Department fellows summed up their objective with this eye-opening statement: "The direction is clear; the path to take us there is not so clear." This song is dedicated to all his fellow Peebtec - pathfinders.

I'm a school wrecker from Old Peebtec
And a systems engineer,
A Wreck of a,
Wreck of a,
Wreck of a,
Wreck of an engineer.

Say all us state ed fellows,
"The path is not so clear,"
I'm a school wrecker from Old Peebtec
And a systems engineer.

O, if I had a daughter, Sir,
I'd hope she'd find a mate,
I'd put her in the Ed School
And there she'd simulate!

But if I had a son, Sir,
I'll tell you what he'd do,
He would yell, to Hell with Teachers,
And their G.D. Union too!

O, I wish I had a barrel,
Of Rum and Sugar, three thousand pounds,
The AFT to put in it
And shut off their protest sounds!

I'd drink to the federal fellows
Who share our concepts dear,
I'm a rambling wreck from Old Peebtec
And a systems engineer!

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